

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 312368

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MT, US, IT

SUBJECT: ELLSWORTH VISIT TO MALTA DECEMBER 13-14

1. PRIOR TO ELLSWORTH TRIP TO MALTA, WE AGREED TO BRIEF ITALIANS ON RESULTS OF VISIT. ON DECEMBER 22 WE GAVE DCM TAMAGNINI FOLLOWING GENERAL ACCOUNT OF MEETINGS WITH MINTOFF, BASED ON ELLSWORTH MEMCON WHICH WE ARE POUCHING SEPARATELY.

2. ELLSWORTH SUGGESTED THAT MINTOFF TAKE ADVANTAGE OF NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH US; THAT HE GET TO KNOW AND UTILIZE AMBASSADOR LAINGEN; THAT MINTOFF TAKE THE OCCASION OF A NEW ADMINISTRATION IN WASHINGTON TO BETTER RELATIONS AND NAME A FULL-TIME AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON. ELLSWORTH NOTED THAT MALTA'S HOSTILE UN VOTING RECORD HAD REINFORCED THE FEELING IN WASHINGTON OF MALTESE OPPOSITION
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TO THE U.S.

3. ELLSWORTH SUGGESTED THAT MINTOFF CONSIDER ALLOWING US NAVY SHIP VISITS TO MALTA AS A DEMONSTRATION OF IMPROVED RELATIONS. MINTOFF DID NOT THINK THIS POSSIBLE WITHOUT ALSO INVITING IN THE SOVIETS. INSTEAD, HE ENVISAGED A LONG TERM

RELATIONSHIP BASED ON MUTUAL ECONOMIC ADVANTAGE. ELLSWORTH SAID ACCESS TO MALTESE FACILITIES BY SIXTH FLEET WOULD BE

USEFUL BUT WAS NOT NECESSARY.

4. MINTOFF THOUGHT THE US WAS COOL TOWARD HIS PROPOSAL FOR EUROPEAN/ARAB GUARANTEES FOR MALTA'S SECURITY AND ECONOMIC FUTURE AND ASKED THAT WE ENCOURAGE EUROPEAN SUPPORT FOR HIS PLAN. ELLSWORTH SAID HE KNEW OF NO US OBJECTION TO MINTOFF'S PROPOSAL AND WE FAVORED EUROPEAN ASSISTANCE TO MALTA.

5. MINTOFF WISHED TO REASSURE THE US CONCERNING HIS RELATIONS WITH LIBYA. HE CLAIMED HE HAD BROUGHT ABOUT MORE MODERATION AND RESPONSIBILITY ON THE PART OF LIBYA.

6. MINTOFF REQUESTED SPECIFICALLY OF THE US: ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING SURPLUS US EQUIPMENT, ESPECIALLY DREDGING EQUIPMENT; NAMES OF RESEARCH INSTITUTES THAT MIGHT DO A MARKET STUDY FOR MALTA; INFORMATION (WHICH ELLSWORTH HAS SUBSEQUENTLY SUPPLIED) ON SOVIET HYDROGRAPHIC VESSELS ASKING TO CALL AT MALTA.

7. ELLSWORTH OUTLINED IN GENERAL TERMS OUR OBJECTIVES IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND MINTOFF SAID HE AGREED WITH THEM.

8. TAMAGNINI ASKED WHETHER MINTOFF HAD EXPRESSED ANY OBJECTION TO PRINCIPLE OF US FLEET PRESENCE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN. WE REPLIED NEGATIVELY.

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9. ON THE QUESTION OF US ASSISTANCE TO MALTA, WE EMPHASIZED THAT MINTOFF HAD ASKED ONLY OUR UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT FOR EUROPEAN ENDORSEMENT OF HIS SECURITY/ECONOMIC PROPOSAL. WE REPEATED THAT THE U.S. DOES NOT OBJECT TO PROPOSED ECONOMIC/SECURITY GUARANTEES FOR MALTA BY EUROPEANS AND WE CONSIDER IT APPROPRIATE THAT THE ITALIANS TAKE THE LEAD IN MUSTERING EUROPEAN SUPPORT. TAMAGNINI SAID THE EC WOULD TAKE THE ISSUE UNDER CONSIDERATION IN ONE OF THE WORKING GROUPS, POSSIBLY THE MEDITERRANEAN GROUP.

10. WE TOLD TAMAGNINI MEETING WAS FRIENDLY AND OUR CONCLUSION WAS THAT US-MALTESE RELATIONS HAD BENEFITTED. ROBINSON

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